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DESCENDANTS OF JOHN WILLIS

OF WILL IN

RICHMOND COUNTY, VIRGINIA

1715

BY  
ELIZABETH (WILLIS) DeHUFF

[AS FAR AS FOUND BY SEPTEMBER 1960,

AUGUSTA, GA.

1962





WILLIS FAMILY as far as found by September 1960

Family tradition is faulty, but it always bears a thread of truth. The most frequent errors are in skipping generations--sometimes omitting several generations completely--and confusing men of the same generation bearing identical names. When descendants of one couple live in the same vicinity for five or six generations, or when the same traditions obtain persistently in widely scattered branches of the mutual ancestor, their traditions are more reliable. In our Willis family five generations have now lived within forty miles of the "old home place" of our ancestor Robert Willis near Williston, South Carolina, so our traditions are more reliable for that reason.

The following are traditions to be considered: my father John Turner Willis (1850-1931), named for his grandfather Willis, told me that his great-grandfather Robert Willis "came from Culpeper County, Virginia," and that he was "descended from Henry Willis, one of three brothers Francis, Henry and William Willis who came from England to America in the 1600's and settled in Virginia." He had never heard the name of Robert's parents. He knew also that somewhere there was a Taliaferro among his an-

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cestors.

A letter from Albert E. Willis, of Rock Hill, S. C. dated Aug. 20, 1945 states, "I am 81 years old..my grandfather was named Williamson Watson Willis...I have heard that our ancestors came from England or Ireland and settled in Va. from there they scattered to South Carolina and some to Kentucky." W. Watson Willis was a son of Robert Willis.

In 1920, John Turner Willis received a letter from Mrs. Jack Harley, Navy Yard, S. C., granddaughter of Robert Moore Willis, another son of the original S. C. Robert Willis, in which she wrote that "Robert Willis came from Culpeper Co., Virginia, to South Carolina with his half-brother Moore Johnson."

September 3, 1960, Mrs. Alice Thomas, of Arlington, Va., who has proved her descent from John Willis, will 1762 in Orange Co., Va., grandson of John Willis, will Richmond Co., Va. 1715, wrote me that "according to tradition, my (Willis) line descends through William who was executor of his uncle's will in 1689." She refers to the will of Francis Willis, dated 1689 and recorded in England in 1791, which is given below.

Among the early Willis records are these:





JOHN WILLIS was in Graveshead to be transported to St. Christopher on "Paul", "aged 29, April 3, 1635" (Hotten's "Original List of Persons of Quality Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations, 1600-1700." p 50.

HENRY WILLIS had land in Charles River Parish, York Co., Va., in 1638/9. (From notes of Mrs. Gottschalk, genealogist) "There is due Rd. Evens 250 acres for transporting ...Henry Willis.. (Va. Col. Abst. Vol. 25 (1646-1648) York Co., p 352.)

FRANCIS WILLIS appears on York Co. records 1645/6. (See first write-up of WILLIS FAMILY.) He "came to America about 1732" Va. Hist. Mag. (This is the Francis who returned to England with wife Jane and left a will 1689-1691.) "Oct. 25, 1649, Leiuetent Will<sup>m</sup> Lewis demandeth 100 acres for transportation of ffrancis Willis his manservant this yeare." (Liber A, folio 265, Grant (280), Maryland Hist. Mag. Vol. 7, p 389.) This could have been the son of Henry Willis, returning from being educated in England.

JAMES WILLIS was in Northumberland Co. 1651/2 when he gave Mary Earle, the younger, a heifer, Jan. 22, 1651/2. Will dated 1655. (Mrs. Gottschalk).

THOMAS WILLIS and wife Mary with their children, appear in the

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Register of Christ Church, Middlesex Co., Va.:

Mary Willis christened Feb. 23, 1660  
Thomas Willis baptized Sept. 8, 1660  
Ellianor Willis born Aprill 18, 1655  
Richard Willis born Aug. 29, 1656  
John Willis born Nov. 24, 1658

Richard Willis married Elizabeth Landon who was administratrix of his estate in Middlesex Co. As a widow Elizabeth married Robert Carter, ca 1708.

THOMAS WILLIS, a Thomas Willis "aged 28 yrs. or thereabouts" made a deposition in favor of John Culpeper in 1675 in North Carolina (N.C. Col. Reos. Vol. 1, p 315)

JOHN WILLIS, in Accomac Co. Deed Bk. Part. 1 1673-1676, pp 277, 280, deed from John and Elizabeth Willis.

A deed reading, "John Willis and wife Jane for and in consideration of the natural love and Fatherly affection which I have and bear unto my son Henry Willis and for divers other good causes and considerations me thereunto moving have given granted bargained sold...and confirmed...unto the said Henry Willis a certain tract or parcell of Land containing by estimation 230 acres part of 1000 acres of land formerly granted by patent to Mr. Arthur Robins and by him sold to Henry Chance of Accomac April 17, 1677 by land of Richard Hollam & Samuel Brandford...





Jane his wife that now is mother of the said Henry Willis." Aug. 3, 1697, signed John (J) his mark Willis Senre Wit.: Jno. Washbourne and Henry Custis. (Accomac Deeds, Pt. I. 1692-1715, pp 168/9)

"Wild Cat Island" in Accomack was deeded to John Willis, Jr. by ffrancis Nicholson, 250 acres on June 19, 1694, Deeds 1673-1676 , pp 50/51.

John Willis, Jr. deeded to John Custis Jr. on June 19, 1694, Deeds 1692-1715, pp 93/94

p 218, witnesses to a deed were John Willis, John Custis and Daniel Willis, Feb. 3, 1701/2.

Accomac Co., Va., Will Bk. 1, p 17, the will of William Blake names wife Jane and among other children were Sarah Willis and Mary Owen. Will dated, Feb. 21, 1692.

Bk. 6, p 285, Westmoreland Co. records, 261 acres were granted to John Willis "on Falling Branch of the Rappahannock adjoining land of John Washington, Oct. 21, 1669."

Bk. 7, p 402, Middlesex ? Co., Va., John Willis of Middlesex Co., son of Thomas Willis had 1150 acres of land (where is not given).

"Under date of Oct. 30, 1664, Thomas Willis had 300 acres of land



in Lancaster Co. and 700 acres for transporting 14 persons. In 1693 he had also 170 acres in York Co. Oct. 8, 1699, John Willis and wife Mary deed a parcel of land to Thomas Ramsey."

Va. Mag. Hist. Vol. 5, p 22, Thomas Willis was a sidesman in Lancaster Co. as per deed made 1657. Oct. 1, 1667 Thomas had wife Mary. Oct. 2, 1670 there was a marriage contract between Mary, widow of Thomas Willis and Matthew Bentley. The children of Thomas and Mary Willis were Richard, John and Eleanor. No record of Bentley issue. Thomas Willis had land on what is known as York Ridge in 1653, and Thomas with William Willis had land in Gloucester Co. 250 acres, 1665 on upper branch of Grave Neck Creek.

WILLIAM WILLIS. In Christ Church Register, Middlesex Co. also are records of William Willis, giving his marriage to Bridget Robinson June 1685 and

Isabelle Willis dau. of Wm. and Bridget baptized 21 Mar. 1686 William Willis son of Wm. and Bridget baptized 4th Jan. 1694. This William is believed to have been the son of William Willis brother of Francis of will 1689 and lived on Craney Creek, Gloucester C.o., Va. (See Will below). But, you will note in the will of Francis Willis that he bequeaths the land on Craney





Creek to his nephew William Willis and heirs of his body, "or for want of such heirs," which indicates that William, of Craney Creek, in 1689 had no child. Wm. and Bridget had a dau. Isabelle, but, perhaps, girls were not considered heirs!

A William Willis was in Oxford in 1651. A William Willis died there in 1663 and in his will he named a brother Thomas as a doctor and a brother John. ("Genealogical Gleanings in England" by Waters.)

In St. Peter's Parish records, King William Co., Va., Daughter Rebecca Willis was baptized 1729, daughter of STEPHEN and SUSANNAH WILLIS.

In June 3, 1735, the will of EDWARD WILLIS, of St. Paul's Parish, New Kent Co., Va. names wife Mary, grandson Daniel Harris of Hanover Co. and "kinsman DANIEL WILLIS." (W&M 21,62) ROBERT WILLIS ran Graves' Ferry over the York River, King and Queen Co., on border of Gloucester Co., Va. prior to 1738.

WILLIS wills and adms in Va. prior to 1800 (Torrence's Index) Index is only for such counties and books as are indexed. Many wills are in other old books and in old chancery suits not shown on this Index.



Accomack Co., Va.,	Daniel Willis (inv)	1737	
	Daniel "	will	1749
	Henry "	"	1750
	on down		
Berkeley Co. ....	Robt. Carter Willis	1783	will
Brunswick Co.=	John Willis	will	1767
Culpeper Co.	FRANCIS WILLIS (inv)	1789	
Fairfax Co.	Thomas Willis	will	1747
Fluvanna Co.	Willis Willis	will	1782
Goochland Co.	Robert Willis	inv.	1753 (2) inv. 1767
	Elender "	will	1795
Hanover Co.....	Edward Willis	will	1735
King George Co.	John Willis	1728	(son of John of Richmond Co.)
	John Willis	adm.	1753 (son of Charles)
	Elizabeth "	will	1767
Middlesex Co.	Daniel Willis	adm.	1678
	John "	will	1688 d.s.p.son of Thos.
	Richard "	inv.	1700 (son of Thomas)
	Thomas "	"	1783 (desc." " )
Northumberland ....	James "	will	1655
Orange Co.	John son of Henry	1750	inv.
	John " "	John	1715..1762
(John & William Plunkett came to Orange Co. from King Geo. Co.			
	John Plunkett's will in Orange Co.	1758	
Richmond Co.	John Willis, Sr.	will	1715
	William Willis	inv	1717 (son of John, Sr.)
Westmoreland Co.....	William Willis	inv	1714
	Bridget "	"	1717
	William "	"	1720
York Co. ?	Oliver "	"	1688/9

Copied from the NEW ENGLAND HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL REGISTER, Vol. 41, pp 257/58 is the following transcript of the will of Francis Willis, wife Jane, who lived for years in America, but returned to England, where he died. He is purported to have been named Francis for his father and grandfather.





Francis Willis of the Parish of Ware River, in the Co. of Gloucester in Virginia, but now resident of the parish of East Greenwich, in the County of Kent, Gentleman, 6 July 1689, proved 25 April 1691.

My body to be decently buried, my executor not exceeding one hundred pounds sterling at my funeral, in costs and charges. To my loving sister Grace Fielder 120 pounds sterling to be paid in manner & form following (that is to say) 15 pounds per annum during her life, or until the sum of 120 pounds be fully paid, which first shall happen. To Charles Fielder, the son of my sister Grace aforesaid 100 pounds sterling (in payments of 20 pounds per annum until the sum of 100 pounds be fully paid. To my cousin Elizabeth Butler and her daughter Sarah Butts 10 pounds sterling apiece. To my cousins Frances and Elizabeth Willis, sisters to Hugh Willis, clerk, the sum of 10 pounds sterling apiece. To Francis and Christopher Willis, the sons of the said Hugh Willis, clerk, deceased, the sum of 20 pounds sterling apiece. To the widow of Hugh Willis 10 pounds sterling. To Susannah Willis, the daughter of my brother Henry Willis 10 pounds sterling. To my cousins John and Joane Lipton 100 pounds sterling & to her two children, Henry and Mary, 130 pounds sterling apiece. To my cousin Mary Herren, the



daughter of my brother Henry Willis deceased the sum of 350 pounds sterling. To Alice Willis, daughter of brother Henry, 350 pounds sterling. To my loving cousin Elizabeth Ironmonger 100 pounds sterling & to her two sons Charles & Matthew Ironmonger 100 pounds sterling apiece.

To William Willis, the son of my brother William Willis deceased, 150 pounds sterling. To the poor of the Parish of St. Fewles als St Algate in the city of Oxford, the place of my birth, 100 pounds sterling. And all my legacies, I desire to be paid within 18 months after my decease.

To my dear & loving wife Jane Willis, the sum of 1000 pounds sterling, to be paid her in the first place, within one year after my decease, and all the household vessels of plate, linen & bedding which she brought over with her from Virginia to England (& other personal estate).

I give unto the said William Willis the son of my brother William Willis deceased all that land & plantation, which his father formerly lived upon and held for me, with the appurtenances, situate on the South side of Craney Creek, containing 100 acres, or thereabouts, to him & the heirs of his body lawfully





begotten, or to be begotten, or for want of such heirs, then to the right heirs of me, the said Francis Willis.

I give and devise unto the said Francis Willis, the son of brother Henry Willis deceased all the rest and residue of all my other estate and estates whatsoever in lands, goods, moneys, cattle & chattells that I now at this time stand siezed or possessed of in Virginia, and not herein already devised, also 1000 pounds, to be paid him within 18 months after my decease.

I ordain & make William Willis the son of my brother Henry Willis deceased, sole executor of this my will and testament. I give unto Mr. Edward Polter, of the Parish of St. Peters, in the East in Oxford City, milliner, and Mr. George Richards of London, merchant, whom I desire and appoint to be overseers &c, the sum of ten pounds sterling apiece.

Witnesses: Richard Jones, Margaret Nicholson, Joseph Busfield. (Vere, 201)

Since tradition is so strong that we descend from one of the three brothers Francis, Henry and William, who came from England to Virginia, we will consider the men named in the will of Francis Willis.

From William and Mary Quart. Vol. 5, p 27 (series 1):



Francis Willis had sons (1) Francis and (2) John Willis, "Gentleman" of New College, Oxford Will probated at Winchester. He married and had Frances, Elizabeth and a son Hugh born 1625. Hugh married Mary (possibly Palmer). Her gr-grandfather was Dionisius Palmer of Essex. Hugh Willis (b 1625) of Thane, Oxford, graduated from New College in 1656. Admon. P.C.C. 1683, had two sons Francis and Christopher. (Bird Chas. Willis and Richard Henry Willis claim in their "The Willis Family" p 13, that Hugh also had a son William Willis.)

In the Diary of William Byrd 1717-1721, he states that while in London in 1718 and 1719, he frequently visited a JOHN WILLIS, whom he called "Jack," to whose wife a child was born 17 Feb. 1717/18. On 7 Aug. 1718, he wrote: "I went to the Virginia Coffeehouse and from thence to Mr. John Willis' to dine, where I saw his brother, just come from Virginia." Mr. Prentice Price, a Willis researcher, thinks this John Willis was a brother of Francis who married "Lady" Ann Rich and Col. Henry Willis, of Fredericksburg.

FRANCIS WILLIS named in the will as son of Francis' brother Henry deceased has not been found, as far as I can discover, in any other documentary record, unless he was the Francis Willis living in London in 1711, who brought suit in the following:

Order Bk. 5, p 268, Richmond Co., Va. Court of May 3, 1711.





Action of detinue was brought in Court by Micajah Perry and FRANCIS WILLIS of the City of London in the Kingdom of Great Brittain vs Griffin Fauntleroy appearing in Court in possession of the estate of John Lloyd. Judgment was granted said Perry and Willis against said Fauntleroy and the Court ordered said Fauntleroy to deliver the estate as well as cattle, negroes, and household furnishings in his custody to sd. Perry and Willis and cost was added to the same.

In Old Rappahannock Records, p 35, Mary Fauntleroy widow of Col. Moore Fauntleroy married William Lloyd before July 28, 1666. Mary and Col. Moore had a son William Fauntleroy who married Catherine Griffin. Their eldest son was Griffin Fauntleroy born ca 1679/80.

Only two sons of this Francis Willis, to whom his uncle left land in Gloucester, are known: Francis Willis b ca 1690 who married Lady Ann Rich and Col. Henry Willis, founder of Fredericksburg, Va. Research on these two lines has been thoroughly carried out for several generations down and we do not belong to either branch. There were reasons to believe that our Robert was the son of Robert Carter Willis, grandson of Francis and Ann Rich Willis, but last year I discovered that Robert Carter Willis married



Martha Sedwick on Dec. 21, 1776. ("Frederick Co. Marriages" 1771-1825, compiled by Eliza Timberlake Davis in 1941, p 15) Surety Valentine Crawford; Father Benjamin Sedwick.

In the "History of Southwest Virginia, Washington Co. 1777-1870" by Summers, p 448: Officers of War of 1812- Lt. L. B. Willis, 12th Reg. of Infantry, recruited at Winchester. In 1850 Lewis Burwell Willis applied for a pension upon this service and stated that he was "about 69 years of age," making him born in 1781, so his brother Robert was born in 1783. Our Robert was born 1772/3.

Also, from the Diary of Mrs. James Nourse of "Piedmont," Berkeley County, Virginia, (now Jefferson County, West Virginia) in the Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society, Volume 24 (December 1958) pages 24 & 25: 10 Mar 1781, Bob & Betsy (Nourse) to christ(ni)ng at Mr. R. Willis's. This was evidently the christening of Lewis Burwell Willis, elder surviving son of Robert Carter Willis.

So we are not descended, as I had thought, from FRANCIS WILLIS son of the immigrant Henry Willis, unless it will be discovered that John Willis who died in Richmond Co., Va. in 1715 was a son of this Francis and, therefore brother of Francis who married Ann Rich and Henry who married three times in Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Co.





Feeling confident that our Robert Willis born 1772/3 did come to South Carolina from Culpeper Co., Va., research has disclosed that among the Willis men in Culpeper Co. at the time from 1770 to 1790, one of whom might have been father of our Robert, there are only two possibilities thus far found: John Willis married Sarah Thomas 27th April 1772 (Marriages of Orange Co., Va.) and a Francis Willis who died intestate in Culpeper Co. in 1789. His inventory was made by John Hiale and Francis Covington, and Armistead White. (Will Book C, p 354)

Concerning John and Sarah Thomas Willis, the following litigation over the will of John's brother Benjamin Willis will show that in 1816, he supposedly had only two sons named Alexander and Abner Willis.

A DIGEST OF THE SUIT PAPERS WILLIS VS WILLIS, from the old defunct Fredericksburg District Court, which included counties of Orange, Culpeper etc., by Geo. H. S. King, of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

1. Benjamin Willis: It is stated that he was considered to be a rich, old bachelor residing in Orange Co., Va., "near the River", which separated his lands from that of Peter Hansbrough,



Sr., in the County of Culpeper in which County the said Benj. also had a small plantation. The said Benj. Willis died on 16th July 1810, leaving a will which was drawn on 29th June 1810 under circumstances somewhat out of the ordinary. This will was admitted to probate 23 July 1810, without opposition from any other heir. In 1814 Reuben Willis and his sister Frances wife of Wm. Camp filed a bill by which they sought to upset the will of their brother, and various depositions were taken, but all of the parties never came to Court or sent their representatives or properly entered into the proceedings. In 1819 the suit was dismissed by the Judge of the Fredericksburg District Court. By this time the family had scattered widely.

Reuben Clarke, a deponent, said that he knew well the said Benjamin and his seven brothers and four sisters, and that at the time of his death, the said Benjamin was about 70 years of age and that he had three brothers dead each of whom left children.

1. Benjamin Willis was possessed of a plantation in Orange Co. on which he lived, slaves to a considerable number, and a smaller plantation in the Co. of Culpeper. He was never married. The following are the brothers and sisters named, and what genealogical information concerning each that is apparent from the





suit papers is given below each name.

2. REUBEN WILLIS, styled Reuben Willis, Sen<sup>r</sup>, a resident in 1815 of Orange Co., Va., a brother and heir at law of Benjamin Willis, dec'd, and one of the complainants in the suit. By 1819 he had removed to Kentucky and failed to prosecute the suit further.

3. JOSHUA WILLIS in 1815-17 in Orange Co., Va., a brother and heir at law of Benj. Willis, dec'd.

4. WILLIAM WILLIS in 1816 in Kentucky, a brother and heir at law of Benj. Willis, dec'd. Three of his sons are named in the will of Benjamin Willis in 1810, viz:

(a) Captain Isaac Willis of the Orange-Culpeper neighborhood, described as the closest kin of Benj. Willis, living near him during his last illness and to whom Benj. bequeathed his landed estate, many negroes, and the bulk of his estate.

Capt. Isaac Willis is accused by Reuben Willis and Mrs. Frances (Willis) Camp of influencing the making of Benj. Willis' will. It was claimed: "Whereas your Orators and Oratrix charge that the said Benjamin Willis was intirely incapable of making any will so as to dispose



of his estate he being at the time and before the making the said writing so purporting to be the last will and Testament of the said Benjamin Willis of unsound mind and memory and that he continued so from that time untill his death so that he could by no means lawfully dispose of his estate by will or otherwise so that the same is descended and come to his heirs at law who are before mentioned."

(There are 15 pages of MSS. E.DeH.)

(b) William Willis, Jr., by 1816 in Kentucky.

(c) Benjamin Willis, Jr., described as namesake of Benj.

Willis, dec'd., who in 1817 was residing at Louisa Court House, Va. To Wm. Jr., Benj. Jr. & Benj., Sr. left certain slaves and they are thus defendants in this suit but none took any part in the proceedings of the cause.

5. LEWIS WILLIS, who was another brother and heir at law of Benj. Willis, dec'd. By 1816, he was residing in Georgia.

6. FRANCES (WILLIS) CAMP, a sister of Benj. Willis, and wife of William Camp of Culpeper Co., Va. Her husband, Wm. Camp, died sometime between 1814-1815, when it is noted that he is deceased and his name removed from the docket as a plaintiff in the cause. In 1819 Frances Camp, widow, is residing in Culpeper





Co.; she is said to have had children though they are not named.

7. SARAH (WILLIS) SHROPSHIRE, a sister of Benjamin Willis, and wife of Walter (Walt, Watt) Shropshire (Stropshire &c) of Orange Co. They were both dead prior to 4 June 1816, though living when the suit was begun in 1814.

8. MARY (WILLIS) PRICE, a sister of Benjamin Willis, and wife of Richard Price. In 1816 they are said to be residents of Kentucky.

9. MARGARET (WILLIS) TERRELL, a sister of Benjamin Willis, and widow of Edmund Terrell "whom she hath survived he having died long before the said Benjamin Willis." Mrs. Terrell was dead before the 14th of June 1816.

10. MOSES WILLIS, who died before his brother Benjamin Willis, leaving as his heirs at law, two sons, viz:

(a) Joseph Willis, who was in Kentucky in 1816

(b) Henry Willis, who was in Kentucky in 1816

11. JOHN WILLIS, who died before his brother Benjamin Willis, leaving as his heirs at law, two sons:

(a) Alexander Willis, who was in Kentucky in 1816

(b) Abner Willis, who was in Kentucky in 1816.





12. JAMES WILLIS, living when his brother Benjamin Willis' will was written on 29th June 1810, but dead by 1814 when this suit was instigated, leaving as his heirs at law, two sons, viz:

(a) James Willis, who was in Georgia in 1816

(b) George Willis, who was in Georgia in 1816

A Mrs. Susan Willis made a deposition in the above litigation on 10th Oct. 1815.

To the Marshall of the Superior Court of Chancery for the Fredericksburg District, Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to summon Joshua Willis, William Willis, Lewis Willis, William Willis Junr., Benjamin Willis, Walter Shropshire & Sarah his wife, Richard Price & Mary his wife, Margaret Terrell, Joseph Willis, Henry Willis, Alexander Willis, Abner Willis, James Willis & George Willis to appear in the Town of Fredericksburg at the Clerk's Office of the Superior Court of Chancery.....this 3d day of May 1816...

On the back of this is written:

1816 June 14th, Executed on Joshua Willis only. Wm. Willis Sr. & Jr., Richard Price & wife, Jos. Willis, Henry Willis, Alexr. & Abner Willis are not Inhabitants, they reside in Ky. Benj. Willis..lives at Louisa Ct. House; Lewis, Jas. & Geo. live



in Ga.; Walter Shropshire & wife, both dead. Margaret Terrell dead also. The above information is derived from Joshua Willis. Signed John Stanard, M.F.C.D.

Since there is no mention in the above suit of a Robert Willis as son of John Willis and wife Sarah Thomas Willis, our Robert Willis (b 1772/3) was probably not their son.

Concerning Francis Willis who died in Culpeper County, Va., in 1789: according to the will of Francis Thornton, who bought much of the land originally granted to John Willis in Westmoreland Co. adjoining the land granted to John Washington, which land was later included in King George Co., Va., Francis Willis was living on Francis Thornton's property in 1766. Excerpt from the will of Francis Thornton, dated 6 June 1766: "I give to my son William Thornton.... so along Murdock's fence to a white oak back of my log house where Francis Willis now lives so along the Cornfield fence William Thornton now tend(s) being the Land I gave him when he Married Elizabeth Fitzhugh..." Also to son William "swamp joyning to Joseph Murdock."

This will was probated at the Court held for King George County the 2nd of July 1767. On the same day, the will of Elizabeth Willis was proved "by Francis Willis Executor."





The will of Elizabeth Willis mentioned above:

"In the Name of God Amen I Elizabeth Willis being sick and weak of Body but in perfect senses & sound Memory do make this my last Will & Testament. I give & bequeath to all my loving Gran Children (viz) William Elizabeth Willis & Younger Johnson one shilling out of my Estate after which Legac(i)es I give & bequeath to my Loving Son Francis Willis all my Estate during his Natural Life after his deceas to my Loving Gran Daughter Jane Willis Daughter to my Loving Son Francis Willis.

Elizabeth (X) Willis

Signed and Sealed in the presence of William Chapman and William Thornton. Proved at a Court held for King George County, Va., the 2nd July 1767 by Francis Willis on the oath of William Chapman."

(King George Co. Will Bk. I, p 261)

In the list of early members of the Baptist Church in Barnwell County, S. C., near where the town of Ellenton was situated, and of which the Rev. James Wilson who married Francis O'Bannon was pastor for about 38 years, is the name JANE WILLIS. No further records of this Jane has been found. In Culpeper Co., Va., Marriage Records are the following:



Jane Willis to William Poulter (Potter?), Dec. 16, 1788

Jane Willis to William Hisle, 1796

Charles Willis to Lucy Shelton, Jan. 16, 1794

Elizabeth Willis to Benjamin Leavell, Oct. 21, 1811

In the census of 1790 for Lower Orangeburg Dist., Barnwell County, is listed Robert Willis with 1 male over 16 years and 2 females. Although our Robert was only 17 years old in 1790, he might have been considered the head of a household containing himself, his mother and a sister, or himself and two older sisters. It is possible that this was our Robert Willis, for in 1790 he and Moore Johnson witnessed a deed for Richard Johnson, Moore's father, of Edgefield County, adjoining Barnwell County, S. C.

The husband of the above Elizabeth Willis of will in 1767 was probably a John Willis who died intestate in King George Co. in 1753 and who was the son of Charles Willis and Matilda Thacher. (See will below of John Willis in 1715). This Will not only shows that a John Willis was son of Charles, son of John Willis; but partly describes land bequeathed to Charles, which his son John might have inherited.

From the John Willis family as compiled by Mrs. V. H. Gottschalk.





Copy of Will of John Willis, State of Virginia, County of Richmond, Will Book No. 3, pp 214, 215, 216 & 217:

"In the Name of God Amen the Seventh Day of June 1715 I John Willis Sen<sup>r</sup> of the County of Richmond & Parish of Hanover in Virginia being in health of Body and of good & perfect Seince and Memory thanks bee to God Doe make this my Last Will & Testament in maner and forme following that is to say first I Bequeath my Soul and Spirit into the hands of the Almighty God my heavenly Father by whom of his Mercy and only Grace I Intrust to bee saved and Redeemed into Eternall Rest through the Death of my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ in whose presious Blood I sett the whole and only hope of my Salvation in hope of a joyfull Resurrection: My Body I Comitt to the Earth to bee Buried with such Charge as itt shall please my Exekutors hereinafter named.

I give and Bequeath unto my Son in Law Thomas James and Mary James his now wife all that Plantation and parcell of Land whereon they the said Thomas and Mary now liveth for and dewring his and her Naturall Lives and from & after his Decease and the Death of the Survivor and longest Liver of them the said land and premises to belong wholly to David James Son of



the said Thomas James to him and his heirs for Evermore, which said Land joyns upon the Land of Mr. John Wormley and upon the Land of Isaac Arnold and Runing from the Land of the said Isaac Easter'ly with the Fence of the said Thomas James the Fence being the Bounds on that side the said Land and from the said Fence Easter'ly as aforesaid not touching any part of my Cleared Ground to a Line of marked trees being the Bounds of the said Land hearby given unto the said Thomas James aforesaid Runing to the Line of John Wormley aforesaid thence along the said Wormleys Line to the Land of Isaac Arnold aforesaid thence with the said Arnolds Line to the place whear itt Began; I doe also Give unto Thomas James aforesaid one Young Cow Called Browney with all her fewter Increase.

I doe Give and Bequeath unto Mary Cullins which now Liveth with mee all that Plantation or percell of Land whereon William Pullin now liveth together also with some part of my Cleared Ground according to the trew Bounds and Distances which I have Lastly given and made Bound the said Mary Cullins her Land hereby given which said Land joyns upon the Land of John Combes and also being some part of my Plantation as aforesaid the said Land I doe Give to the said Mary Cullins her heirs Lawfully Begotten





of her Body for Evermore But if in Case Ye said Mary should Dye without Ishew Lawfully Begotten as aforesaid that then and in such Case the said Land wholly to return to my Son Charles Willis and his heirs for Evermore. I Doe also Give unto Mary Cullins aforesaid One fether Bedd and one Rugg which is now in my house and one pare of new Blankitts and one small Iron Pott one Bell mettle Spice Morter and pestle and one Dozen of Pewter Spoons which are new and one new pewter Basson and one Bright Bay Mare with a Starr in the forehead and a Sprigg taile and also one Eue and one Lambe and one pide heffer about two years ould with all and every of their fewter Increase to her and her heirs for Evermore Butt if in Case the said Mary should Dye without Ishew then all and whatsoever I have hearby Given to the said Mary of personall Estate to Returne and bee Devided amongst all and every one of my Children Sons and Daughters And I doe also Give unto the said Mary Cullins One Oaken Chest and one trunke Which Chest and trunk are to return as aforesaid if in Case the said Mary should Dye without Ishew as aforesaid.

I Doe Give and Bequeath unto my Son Charles Willis the Plantation and Land I now Live on and also that Plantation



whearon sd. Charles now Liveth together also with all the Land Contained and held by Pattent or Grant for this tract and two Plantations hereby Given to the said Charles Excepting that part which I have hearby Given unto Thomas James aforesaid and that other part which I have hearby Given to Mary Cullins aforesaid. My Will is that the whole remaining part to this tract or Devident with the two Plantations aforesaid Doe belong wholley to my Son Charles & Mattilldoe his now Wife for and dewring his and her naturall Lives and from and after the Death of the said Charles & Mattildoe the said Land and presises to belong wholley to John Willis Son of the said Charles to him and his heirs for Evermore. My Will is that my Son Charles Doe not Sell nor Imbezell no timber from of the said Land But to make use of what hee hath needfull Ocation of makeing no Eastt.

Itt beeing the Will of my Late Wife Mattilldoe Willis that my Son Charles Willis aforesaid and Mattilldoe his wife their heirs &c: should have out of my Estate the fether Bedd which I now Lye on and furniture Curtains and vallins Rugg and Blankitts and Boulster and Pillows thei to belonging and four Young Cows and a Young Mare, my Will is that my Wife's Desier bee fullfilled and that for the said Charles and Mattilldoe the sd. Bedd and





Cows and Mare doe wholly belong to them and their heirs for Evermore together with the Increase of the sd. cows.

And for the remaining part of my Cattle and also my whole Stock of hoggs and Sheep Excepting one Eue and Lambe hearby Given to Mary Cullins aforesaid and also one heffer Given to the said Cullins I doe Give to my Son Charles and his heirs for Evermore I Doe also Give to my son Charles One Small Iron Pott and my least or smallest Brass Kettle, and all the Insewing Cropp of Indian Corne and the Insewing Crop of tobacco I Doe Give to my Son Charles and my Son William to bee Equally Devided between them the said Charles and William paying out of the said Crop to my Daughter Sewsanah five hundred pounds of tobacco.

And paying also out of the said Cropp to Mary Gardener five hundred pounds of tobacco.

I Doe Give to my Son Charles three thousand nayles or theirabouts being all the Nayles that I have in my house and also all my powder and Stroll which is in my house My Will is that for that part of my Plantations which I have hearby Given to Mary Cullins my Son Charles Willis aforesaid have Liberty to pasture Ground thearin and also William Pullin to have the



same Liberty of pasture Ground therein.

I Doe Give unto Mary Cullins aforesaid all the Rents of the Plantation which William Pullin now Liveth on being five hundred pounds of tobacco to bee paid Dewly and Yearly Dewring the term of his Leace which is Nine Years from ye Date hearof and One Years Rent which is not yett paid but Remains Due being five hundred pounds of tobacco, which tenn Years Rents I doe Give to Mary Cullins aforesaid and her heirs for Evermore Butt in case she should Dye without Ishew the Rents or tobacco to Return to all and every one of my chilldren and to bee Equally Deviced amongst them all Sons and Daughters.

My will is that Isaac Arnold and William Willis as Guardians to the said Mary Cullins doe Look after and are hearby Impowred to Look after and see that William Pullin aforesaid his heirs &c: Doe take into his cosdotie and his or their Care all the tobacco Stock Goods and Moveables whatsoever hearby Given unto Mary Cullins and that hee or they Doe trewly pay and Deliver all such tobacco and Goods and Stock the vallew of such Goods and Stock in tobacco unto her the said Mary Cullins when she shall arive to the age of Sixteen or att the first Day of Marriage if married before Sixteen and further if in case the said William





Pullin his heirs &c: shall neglect or Delay the payment of such tobacco Stock and Goods when the same shall become Due that the same to bee taken out of his hands by the Guardians and they to see that shee the said Mary hath the same trewly and honestly paid her.

My Will is that what Goods and Moveables Soe Ever and all other things that apertains to my Estate and is not yett Disposed of by this my Last Will and Testament Goods pewter Brass and Iron and all other things their to Belonging bee Equally Devided amongst all and Everyone of my children and Daughters Each to have an Equall part thereof.

I Doe make and Opoint my Loving Son John Willis and Isaac Arnold my Exekutors of this my Last Will and Testament and in Confirmation whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and fixt my Seale the Day Month and Year first above wrighten.

the mark of

John



Willis

SEAL

Signed Sealed and  
delivered in the presence of us.

Tho: Parker  
Augustine (X) Blake  
Elliner (c) Welsh

(The name of the child has  
also been read as "Mary  
Cussins.")



This Will was proved in Richmond County Court the Sixth Day of July 1715 by the Oaths of Thomas Parker Augustine Blake and Ellinor Welsh witnesses thereto, and Admitted to Record.

Test

M: Beckwith Cl: Cur.

The above John Willis, Senr. died in what is now King George County, Virginia, but was before 1721 a part of Richmond Co. There were several parishes in King George Co., and the boundaries of this county were altered several times, both by additions and by the cutting off of areas for new counties. Richmond Co. was formed as a jurisdictional Court in 1692 from Old Rappahannock County, when this older Court was divided into two counties, Essex and Richmond, and the name Rappahannock was dropped. Later another county was given this name but it lies in a different section of the State. Rappahannock Co. records are now at Tappahannock, Essex Co., Va.

John Willis Sr. patented land on Oct. 21, 1669 next to land patented to John Washington which now lies in Hanover Parish, King George Co., Va. This is referred to in a deed made by his grandson (Order Bk. I, p 607, King Geo. Co., Va., 1729-30).

In his will he mentions "Land by patent and by grant," hence





he had other lands besides the above patent which was for 261 acres on the Rappa. river.

Boundaries of his land, as shown in Richmond Co. records (wills and deeds) thus far found are:

"land adjoins John Wormeley's land"  
 " " Isaac Arnold's "  
 " that William Pullin lives on in 1715  
 " adjoins John Comb's land, left to Mary Cullins  
 and entailed to son Charles  
 tract of land that he lived on 1715  
 " " " " son Charles lives on

Westmoreland Co., Va., John Willis bought 200 acres on Oct. 28, 1668. (Ref. not given).

John (x) Willis to Matilda Thacher, whom he "intends to make his wife" deed in Bk. 1, Richmond Co., Va., p 79, on Dec. 11, 1691. (Copied by E. DeH.) Bk. 1, p 84, gives the date July 22, 1693, acc. to Mrs. Gottschalk.

In Deed Bk. 4 (1705-1708) p 102-a, "Whereas John Willis & John Parsons of the Co. of Richmond became seized in Joyn-tennacy of in and to 148 acres of Land lying and being in St. Mary's Parish in the Co. aforesaid as may appear by a patent under the hands of Phill. Ludwell Esq. then Agent & Attorney to the Proprietors 27th Feb. 1690/91.

John Parsons dying willed to John Parsons & Walter



Anderson who purchased of sd: John...."

Richmond Co., Bk. 4, p 103, March 21, 1706, John Willis, Jr. to Walter Anderson..."land which was given to the said John Willis, Jr., by his father...land had been John Parson's land..."

Order Bk. 2, p 16, 1694, John Willis and Matilda his wife acknowledge a deed to John Willis, Jr. for 100 acres. This land shows up later on the King Geo. Co. books.

Bk. 3, p 60 (68), April 26, 1701, John Willis of Richmond Co., Va., to my son William Willis of Richmond Co., Va., "for the natural love and affection which I doe bear unto my loving son...all that part of a patent of land...except 100 acres formerly given by me to my eldest son JOHN WILLIS, as shown by record in Richmond Co., Va....and if the said WILLIAM WILLIS should die without issue then the said land to revert to my son JOHN WILLIS and his heirs forever ...after the death of HER whom the said William Willis should intermarry with, who shall enjoy the same during her life time and the said John Willis, only having to himself the right and liberty to timber...during his lifetime.." land contains 161 acres which is deeded herein to said William Willis...part of a grant for 261 acres...out of which 100 acres has previously been given to John Willis Jr.





Bk. 1, p 97, Jan. 3, 1692, Richmond Co., Va., John Willis to Thomas Kendall..."land in Richmond Co., along the Rappahannock River..."

John Willis, Sr. names definitely the following children:

Eldest son	John	and makes him Exr. of his Will, 1715
(2nd son)	William	and makes him guardian of the girl Mary Cullins (Cossins?) was she grand-dau. of Matilda Thacher, widow of Henry Thacher?
(3rd son)	Charles	to whom he sets aside land and personal property. Chas. m his step-sister Matilda Thacher. They lived in King Geo. Co.
dau.	Mary	"the now wife of Thomas James," son David (records of them are in King Geo., Co.)
dau.	Susannah	sons Chas. and Wm. are to pay her 500 lbs. of tobacco.

Since he bequeaths Mary Gardiner 500 lbs. of Tobacco...she must have been on an equal footing with Susannah, perhaps a granddaughter.

Isaac Arnold, made an Exr. of the Will and also one of the Guardians of Mary Cullins, possibly married a daughter, as husband of the eldest dau. stood in legal right to be Exr. instead of one of the other sons.

In his will John Willis mentions "all of my sons and daughters" and leaves any undivided part of the estate to be divided equally among "all of my sons and daughters," and "the daughters to have equal parts with the sons..."



Since son John Willis was apparently of age in 1694 when his father deeded 100 acres of land to son John, John Willis Sr. must have married in 1672 or earlier. The first wife was the mother of his children. He could have married several times, with Matilda, Widow Thacher as his last wife.

JOHN WILLIS of Hanover Par., King Geo. Co., Va., Planter

to

1899254

William Robinson, Gent, of same place...

"...whereas John Willis Sr., Dec'd, grandfather of the said JOHN Willis party to these presents was in his lifetime seized in Fee of 261 acres of land with all the appurtenances..situate lying and being in the aforesaid Parish of Hanover and County of King George which was granted unto him by letters Patent bearing the date of Oct. 21, 1669 and being so seized by deed or assignment indorsed on the back of the said letters Patent bearing the date of April 26, 1701 did give and grant unto his son WILLIAM WILLIS, now deceased and his heirs lawfully begotten of his body 161 acres of land part of the said 261 acres by the name of ALL THE REMAINING LAND OF THE WITHIN PATENT of land except 100 acres formerly given to his son John Willis as by the said letters of Patent and assignment recorded in the County of Richmond relation





thereunto may more at large appear and WHEREAS the said WILLIAM WILLIS is now dead and the 161 acres of land are descended and come to the said JOHN WILLIS party to these presents, the eldest son and heir of the body of the said William Willis whereby the said JOHN WILLIS is seized of the said premises in Fee tail and whereas by an inquisition taken before Benj. Berryman, Gent., Sheriff of sd King Geo. Co. on March last by virtue of a writ in the nature of an ad quod damnum to him directed pursuant to the act of the Assembly in such cases made and provided it is found that the said 161 acres of land are of the value of 60 pounds sterling and no more and that same are a separate parcel and a parcel of or contiguous to other entailed lands in the possession and seizen of the said JOHN WILLIS as by the inquisition now remaining in the Secretary's office of this Colony relation being thereunto had may more at large appear... John Willis doth hereby grant bargain and sell to said Wm. Robinson.

Release is signed by Elizabeth, wife of John Willis.

Deed Bk. 2, pp 126-27, June 1, 1737, King George Co., Va.

JOHN WILLIS, of Hanover Par., King Geo. Co., Va., Planter and William Robinson, gent, and Joseph Strother and Maximilian Robinson, gent,...church wardens of the parish on the other part...



John Willis and Wm. Robinson...do grant bargain and sell to said Strother and Max: Robinson..all that tract and parcel of land containing by estimation 261 acres of land in Hanover Par., King Geo. Co., Va.,...which said land was granted to JOHN WILLIS Sr. grandfather of the said JOHN WILLIS party to these presents... by letters of patent dated Oct. 21, 1669...and 100 acres thereof were given by the said JOHN WILLIS Sr., dec'd to his son John Willis (dec'd) in feetail by a deed dated Dec. 10, 1694 and by the death of the said JOHN WILLIS, the son without issue are reverted and come to the said JOHN WILLIS party to these presents as heir-at-law of the said JOHN WILLIS the grandfather and the residue of the said premises were given by the said JOHN WILLIS (Sr.) the grandfather to his son WILLIAM WILLIS father of the said JOHN WILLIS who is party to these presents....

Richmond Co., Order Bk. 5, p 78, Sept. 7, 1709.

John Combs came into Court and by virtue of Power of Attorney from WILLIAM WILLIS acknowledged a deed for land from the said WILLIAM WILLIS to John Hansford and same was admitted to record. Also by Power of Attorney from Sarah, wife of William Willis to him in her behalf, relinquished the said Sarah's right of dower in land conveyed to Hanxford, and deed was admitted to record.





The above records show that John Willis, Sr. left land to sons John & William Willis.

John Willis, Jr. died 1727-28. Inv. 1728.

Son WILLIAM WILLIS married before 1709, died 1717/18 leaving a widow Sarah and an eldest son JOHN WILLIS, who was still under age of 21 on July 2, 1731.

That the widow SARAH m 2nd Henry Wood who d, 1722 and that she m 3rd Rush Hudson who was still living in 1731.

Deed Bk. 1-A, pp 324-327, March 5, 1734, King Geo. Co., Va.

William Wood of St. Mark's Parish, Orange Co., Va. and RUSH

HUDSON of Hanover Par., King Geo. Co., Va., planter,...Wm.

Wood "sells to said Hudson those two tracts of land

(1) contains 140 acres binding on lands of Col. Page, John

Taylor, and on land on which said Rush Hudson now dwells...

and whereon Henry Wood, dec'd formerly lived...and bounding

on a creek...

(2) contains 100 acres whereon George PARSONS now dwells,

adjacent land of Rowland Thornton (brother of Francis

Thornton), JOHN WILLIS, and Edmund Donohoe...being formerly

purchased by said HENRY WOOD, father of the said William

Wood from John HANSFORD..and both tracts of land descended



to said Wm. Wood as heir at law of the aforesaid Henry Wood, dec'd  
 ....sells for one ear of corn. This 100 acres was sold by Wm.  
 Willis to Hansford 1709.

Wit.: Benj. Adie

JOHN WREN (m widow Elizabeth Ferguson)

George Parsons..

Henry Wood m 1. \_\_\_\_\_ and had son William Wood

" " m 2. Sarah, widow of William Willis and had by her one  
 son Henry Wood, named in his mother's will.

Henry Wood died in King Geo. Co., Va., 1722.

Bk. 3, p 173-178, Feb. 20, 1746.

Rush Hudson of St. Mark's Parish, Orange Co., Va.

(Son of Rush Hudson and Sarah \_\_\_\_\_ Willis, Wood, Hudson--later  
 Turberville. Rush Hudson Sr. died in 1735).

to

Francis Thornton, Gent., of Hanover Parish, King George Co., Va.

"...four parcels of land..total of 265 acres.....

(1) contains 40 acres land on which David Jones now lives...

being land on which Rush Hudson, Sr., formerly lived and

adjoining on the westernmost side of Partridge's Creek...

(2) being 100 acres adjoining land of sd Fra: Thornton and on land





of JOHN WILLIS and on land of Edmund Donahoe lying on the lower side of the main branch of sd Creek.

(3)..30 acres being a part of a patent granted to John Washington..

(4)..65 acres being the land which said Rush Hudson, Sr., purchased from George Green lying on lower side of Partridge's Cr....which said four parcels of land were purchased by the said Rush Hudson Sr. and the said Rush Hudson, Sr. dying intestate the said land became the property of the afore-said Rush Hudson Jr., party to these presents... signed  
Rush Hudson

His wife Sarah signed the dower.

Wits.: Wm. Longmire  
John Wren  
Wm. Wren

Will of Sarah Turberville. Bk. 2, p 310, Orange Co., Va.

dated June 18, 1760, probated May 28, 1761:

To my son John Willis	1 shilling
To my son William Willis	10 shillings
To my son Henry Wood	£2
To my son David Hudson	1 shilling
To my son Joshua Hudson	1 shilling
To my daughter Sarah Hawkins..	all my wearing clothes
To Rush Hudson's dau. Mary	1 chest
To Rush Hudson's dau. Elizabeth	1 trunk
All to my son Rush Hudson and he to be my Executor	

Wit: Benjamin Hawkins )



Moses Harwood  
Kesia Rosser

JOHN WILLIS (William, John Sr.) was born in King Geo. Co., Va., ca 1710-11 (not 21 July 1731), son of William Willis and Sarah \_\_\_\_\_. He died in Orange Co., Va. in the Spring of 1762.

He married in King Geo. Co., Va., Elizabeth Plunkett (bond) Jan. 1734/35 (1735). St. Paul's Parish Reg. Bk. 2, p 142, March 2, 1736, King Geo. Co., Va.

John Willis of Hanover Parish, King Geo. Co., Va., Planter to Isaac Pitman, deed by lease and release

144 acres..bounded...at a black oak in the line of land of ARCHIDELL COMBS dec'd...near the road from Major Murdocks to the Bristol Iron Works..and along the cornfield of the said JOHN WILLIS...

Dower signed by Elizabeth, wife of John Willis, March 7, 1736.

John Willis Sr.'s land was described as adjacent Combs land which he willed to Mary Cullins, then to son Charles. Francis Thornton wills land joining Joseph Murdock's to son William Thornton. This John Willis was probably son of Charles. John died 1753 and wife Elizabeth's will was proved





1767.

Will of JOHN WILLIS. Bk. 2, p 323, Orange Co., Va.

In the name of God, Amen, Orange Co., Hanover Parish, Nov.  
25, 1761.

I, John Willis doe constitute and ordain this as my last  
will and testament in the manner and form following:

Imprimus, To my son William I give negroes Thom & Judith  
and the lot in Culpeper to be belonged to the aforesaid William  
after my decease...

The negroes Daniel & Millie I give to Edmund Terrill.

To Walter Shropshire...I allow him one shilling and three  
pence. And to every child viz: John, Benjamin, Joshua, James,  
Reuben, Francis, Lewis, Moses and Mary  
the rest of my estate to be equally divided among them. My  
beloved wife shall keep in her possession the aforesaid estate  
during her life.

The place formerly belonging to Mr. Marks belongs to Benjamin.  
This place where I live belongs to John.

Witness my hand (signed with a mark) John Willis

Witnesses, Arch. Campbell

Elizabeth W. Willis



N.B. My son William and Edmund Terrill to be Executors.

Recorded the 25th day of March 1762 by William Willis one of the Exrs.

Bk. 13, p 484, Orange Co., Va., dated Nov. 19, 1764.

To all to whom these presents may come...Know ye that I ELIZABETH WILLIS, relict of John Willis dec'd., of Orange Co., Va., Whereas the said John Willis did by his last will and testament dated Nov. 21, 1761 gave legacies to his children and left the rest of the estate in my possession and at my decease the said estate to be divided equally among my NINE YOUNGEST CHILDREN: viz: JOHN, BENJAMIN, JOSHUA, JAMES, REUBEN, FRANCES, LEWIS, MOSES, and MARY. ... and I being willing that the children be assured of their property and for the love and affection which I have for them do hereby give them their parts.

Wit: David Hudson

William Johnson and Lucy, his wife

to

James Gordon, Jr., 200 acres....lying and being in the County of Culpeper....at the mouth of Rumsays Branch, on the north side of River Rappidan.... Dec. 1, 1780, Culpeper Co. Deed Book K, p 285. Elizabeth Johnson (probably daughter of grandson William named in





will of Elizabeth Willis 1767)

to

James Johnson, Jr. A certain piece or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Culpeper being the said Elizabeth Johnson's portion of the land left by her father, the late William Johnson, dec'd. containing 25 acres. March 12, 1831, Culpeper Co. Deed Book XX, p 435.

Summation:

Robert Willis was in Edgefield Co., S. C. on April 24, 1790 when he witnessed a deed for Richard Johnson, together with Moore Johnson. (Deed Bk. 7, p 91). He was still in Edgefield Co. when the census for 1810 was taken. He bought land in Barnwell Co., S. C., in 1817/18 and moved there and was buried there in 1844. He probably married in 1796 when on April 13th he paid £ 50 sterling to Richard Johnson, Sr. "of Turkey Creek" for 200 acres of land on Jones' branch. (Edgefield Co. Deed Bk. 13, p 171); which he sold to Henry Anderson on Sept. 12, 1808. (Bk. 29, p 297).

If Robert Willis had been the son of John and Sarah Thomas Willis, he would have been their eldest son, and assuredly would have been named by his uncle Joshua Willis as



an heir of John Willis dec'd in 1810, in the litigation over the will of Benjamin Willis in Orange and Culpeper Cos., Va. Alexander and Abner Willis were so named. No further record of Abner has come to light; but Alexander Willis appears on the Tax List of Fayette Co., Ky. on Aug. 19, 1800 (Census Ky. 1800). The only connection between Robert Willis of Barnwell Co. and John and Sarah Thomas Willis is (1) that the date of Robert's birth would fit, and (2) in 1773, John and Sarah Willis were living in Culpeper Co., Va., and (3) the fact that Robert named a daughter Sarah. Robert's eldest son John Turner Willis was probably named for the doctor of that section, Dr. John Turner, or for some other member of that Turner family. Another, younger, daughter of Robert and Keziah Willis was named Matilda, which is a clue to his possible descent from Charles and Matilda Willis and their son John Willis, or some unknown son of Charles. This John Willis' daughter married a Johnson (Will of Elizabeth Willis, King Geo. Co. 1767). The daughter's name was probably "Lucy," (Deed of William Johnson and wife Lucy, 1780).

In Edgefield Co., S. C., Deed Bk. 12, p 581, Willis Johnson (named as grandson by Elizabeth Willis, 1767, King Geo. Co., Va.) bought land in 1795 on West side of Stephens Creek, part of it





originally granted to Henry Key, Jr., Esq. in 1773. A further search of the records of King George Co., Va., might show that Charles and Matilda Willis had other sons besides John, from one of whom Robert could have been descended. It is also possible that the Elizabeth Willis, will 1767, was a second wife of John Willis who died in 1753. Further study must be made of the King George Co., Va., records.

Still there is the question, where did Robert Willis get \$2400 in 1817/18 to buy 1700 acres of land in Barnwell Co.? What of the cherished silver teaspoons made in Philadelphia in the 1750's-1790's?

Several things have puzzled me: (1) Why was it that a group of descendants of Robert Willis, who had lived in or near Willis-ton, S.C. all of their lives, and who were excellent doctors, engineers, teachers and successful farmers did not know--not one of them acknowledged knowing-- the names of the parents of their ancestor Robert Willis, yet each knew the names of parents and grandparents of his wife Keziah Watson unless there was something their elders believed was "best forgotten"?; (2) When I told "Cousin Bessie" Willis, granddaughter of Williamson Watson Willis and Charity Johnson, (whom she said were half-first-cousins) and



thus descended from both Robert Willis and Moore Johnson, that I believed the mother of Robert Willis was the illegitimate daughter of John Allen, of Spotsylvania Co., Va., she burst into spontaneous laughter and refused to tell me why she was laughing; (3) Richard Johnson, Jr., half-brother of Moore Johnson, and eldest son of Richard Johnson, of Edgefield Co., S.C., died childless and was possessed of vast acreage and many slaves. In his will Richard Jr. named brothers John and Haley and sister Mary Burton, niece Emily Chandler and nephew George, son of Haley, but left nothing to Moore. Moore named his only son "Haley."

Richard Johnson, son of Thomas Johnson and wife Ann Meriwether, married Dorothy Powers, Nov. 14, 1769. ("Lewises, Meriwethers and Their Kin", by Sarah Anderson, p 176).

Spotsylvania Co. Records, Bk. G, p. 276, states that Richard Johnson, James, Mary, Rechel (sic) and Dorothy of Caroline deeded land to John McCauley on April 8, 1769. (B. & S, p 279).

Because of dates the above two Richard Johnsons could not have been the same Richard.

In Va. County Records Vol. 1, p 85, June 21, 1738, Richard Johnston married Dorothy Waller, dau. of William Waller and Ann Beverley. Richard was given land in Spotsylvania Co. by





his father William, Aug. 1, 1763. William also deeded land to son James Johnston.

The names in the above deed of April 8, 1769 must then have been children of Richard Johnson, son of William. This Richard (son of Richard, son of William) moved to South Carolina. Evidently he married several times. (1) Prob. a Haley, (2) the mother of Moore, and (3) Charity, possibly Charity Couch, a niece of Michael Watson. (Notes of the late Edgefield genealogist, Mrs. Hill). A Rachel Johnson, who married David Johnson, left a will in Edgefield Co., S. C., dated Sept. 8, 1798. Her daughter Fannie married Haley Johnson, son of Richard Sr. and brother of Richard Jr. (Will of Richard Jr., Bundle 15, pkg. 536, Edgefield Co.). Her oldest son was "James" Johnson.

(4) Another puzzle: in his book "The Willis Family" by Byrd Charles Willis, in collaboration with his grand-nephew, Byrd Charles gives in detail whom the brothers and sisters of Robert Carter Willis married, with parentage in most cases and names of children; but he only states that "Robert Carter Willis married Martha." No surname given the wife nor names of children. Why, unless he was not proud of the alliance? Of course, since Frederick Co. was far away, Byrd Charles might not have known

The first of these is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The second is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The third is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The fourth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The fifth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The sixth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The seventh is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The eighth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The ninth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The tenth is the fact that the number of cases of

the disease is increasing.

The eleventh is the fact that the number of cases of

Martha Sedwick's last name; or there might have been two wives named Martha, and one of them, in those days, was considered as having no surname.

As stated above, record has been found of the marriage of Robert Carter Willis and Martha Sedwick on Dec. 21, 1776, Benjamin Sedwick named as father of Martha. (Frederick Co., Va., Marriages 1771-1825, compiled by Eliza T. Davis, 1941, p 15).

The will of Benjamin Sedwick, Frederick Co., Va., Bk. 4, p 672/3, dated Mar. 2, 1782, proved Sept. 2, 1783, bequeathes all his land to two sons James and John; gives a slave each and other personal property to three daughters Betty, Christiana Mary and Hannah Ann Sedwick; and states, "And whereas my Daughter Martha hath Married and left me & I think I have already given her as much as I can the rest of my children I give and bequeath Five Pounds to be paid to her out of my Estate and no more." Wits: Stephen Johnson, Jasper Ball, William Frost and Thomas Shepherd.

In an abstract of the will of John Allen, given in "Virginia County Records, Spotsylvania Co. 1721-1800," by W. A. Crozier, Vol. 1, p 10, is the following: Allen, John, Spotsylv. Co., I. Fredericksburg, Mar. 14, 1749, proved Apr. 3, 1750. Wit. Pat Connelly, John Simpson, James Allenach, Adam Stephen, Francis





Gibson. Exrs. Coll. John Waller, Junr., Mr. Archd. McPherson, William and James Hunter, James Allen, Mr. Archd. Ingram, Merch. in Glasgow. Leg. my natural dau., Martha, who lives at the house of HENRY WILLIS, Gentl. 1000 lbs. to be paid when she arrives at the age of 21 years, or marries with the consent of Coll. Wm. Waller, Junr., Mr. Archd. McPherson and Wm. Hunter, who I appoint her guardians. To my mother 400 lbs; to my sister Christian 1400 lbs, above sums to be remitted to Mr. Archd. Ingram, Merch. in Glasgow. To friend, Wm. Hunter 100 lbs; to my bro, James Allen lot 62 in Fredericksburg, my household furniture and merchants goods. To Dr. Adam Stephen 10 volumes of Rollings Ancient History; to my aunt, Sarah Blake, in Hamelton, 20 lbs. The remainder of my estate to be divided between the children of my aunt Jane Black, in Hamelton; the children of John Wallson, in Hamelton, in parish of Glasgow; the children of Mary Struthers in Glasgow. Testator to be bur. on Farm Hill plantation. (p.19). Will Book B. - 1749-1759, p.10.

The Henry Willis, Gentl, referred to above, in whose home Martha Allen lived, had married his step-sister Elizabeth Gregory, daughter of Mildred Washington (Gregory) Willis, 3rd wife of Col. Henry Willis, of Fredericksburg, on Apr. 29, 1743



(p 85 of Spots. Records) and they had no children of their own. That might account for their having taken Martha into their home, or Martha might have been closely related to Elizabeth Gregory Willis, which is likely.

Of the men mentioned above as guardians of Martha Allen: William Waller Jr. <sup>was</sup> /nephew of Dorothy Waller who married Richard Johnson; Archibald McPherson died intestate shortly after John Allen. William, Jr. and Dorothy Waller were children of William Waller who married Ann Beverly June 21, 1738 and Richard Johnson <sup>or brother</sup> was the son/of William Johnston who married Betty Taylor July 6, 1744 (Ibid, p 85). William Hunter married Martha Taliaferro, daughter of John and Mary Taliaferro. (Ibid, p 7).

Will of John Taliaferro, Apr. 30, 1744; Aug. 7, 1744, "to William Hunter as a portion to my dau. Martha 300 acres out of the Robinson tract," wife Mary, sons Lawrence and William and daus. Lucy and Molly. John Taliaferro married Mary Catlett, dau. of Capt. John and Elizabeth Gaines Catlett. (Ibid, p 7). Will of William Hunter, Nov. 5, 1753, Mar. 5, 1754, dau. Martha Hunter £ 1000 currency; sons James and William "to be educated at the College of William and Mary." (ibid, p 13). William Hunter, merchant, and Martha Taliaferro married April 5, 1744. (Ibid, p 85). William





Taliaferro was appointed guardian of James, William and Martha, orphans of William Hunter dec'd. 1754. (Ibid, p 13).

Henry Willis, Jr. died ca 1751 and his widow Elizabeth Gregory Willis married Reuben Thornton. Did William and Molly Hunter take the small child Martha Allen at that time and give her the surname of Hunter? William Hunter bequeathed to daughter Martha the exact sum of £ 1000 that had been left by John Allen for his natural daughter Martha? And William Hunter had been made a guardian of Martha.

This Martha Allen could have married Robert Carter Willis about 1770 and had a young son Robert Willis b 1772/73. If Martha had died, Robert Carter Willis would have kept his son or continued to care for him; but, although it could never be proved, if Martha had refused to go with her husband Robert Carter Willis into the newly settled Shennandoah Valley country and he divorced her, that would add more disgrace for Byrd Charles Willis to forget. The divorced Martha could have married widower Richard Johnson as his second wife and become the mother of Moore Johnson. Richard Johnson married as a third wife Charity \_\_\_\_\_, of Edgefield Co., S. C.

Judging by her will and her second marriage to the Rev.



Richard Swift, Robert Carter Willis' wife Martha Sedwick Willis was an unusually fine person. As such, she would have insisted upon giving a step-son, ignored by his father's will, a share of the father's property after it had been liquidated in 1817, and also a small share of the family silver--one-half of a dozen silver teaspoons.

If this marriage of Robert Carter Willis and Martha Allen-Hunter were true, it would answer all of the things that have puzzled me: the silence of Robert Willis and his children, of Barnwell Co., as to his parentage; the failure of Byrd Charles Willis to give a surname to "Martha", wife of Robert Carter Willis; Robert's ability to buy large tracts of land in 1817, 18; the six cherished teaspoons; the assurance that Robert was descended from one of the three brothers that came from England to Virginia; and that Robert did come from Virginia to South Carolina. Martha Allen must have been the great granddaughter of John Taliaferro, or of Mildred Gregory Willis.

The three Gregory sisters married three Thornton brothers, sons of Francis Thornton (1698-1749) and his wife Mary Taliaferro, daughter of Col. John Taliaferro "The Ranger" and Sarah Smith, daughter of Lawrence Smith and wife Mary \_\_\_\_\_ of





Gloucester Co., Va., (1656-1720). A deed dated Jan. 5, 1733 between Mildred Gregory, Henry Willis and John Washington "in view of the intended marriage of Henry Willis and Mildred Gregory" conveyed property "to son Lewis" and daughters Frances Thornton, Mildred and Elizabeth Gregory. (W & M (1) 6, p208-211). Lewis Willis, son of Henry and Mildred was not born until Nov. 11, 1734. (Ibid). Therefore, Frances Gregory Thornton could have been the grandmother of Martha who was "in the home of Henry Willis, Gent. in 1749."

Whether or not the above suppositions were true, Robert Willis and Moore Johnson in South Carolina in 1790 could hardly have been half-brothers unless Richard Johnson married a divorced Mrs. Willis, or a young widow Willis. Thus far no Willis man has been found who died between the birth dates of those two men: Robert Willis and Moore Johnson. The search for such a Willis should go on. The possibility, however, is that Francis Willis who, died intestate in Culpeper Co., Va., in 1789, and who was named in his mother Elizabeth Willis' will in 1767 with daughter Jane, might have had a son, unrecorded, who married ca 1771 and died shortly thereafter ca 1773 and had a son Robert. The widow afterwards married Richard Johnson and



had Moore Johnson and then she, too, died. When a child's parents die when he is very young and he is reared by others, sometimes the child knows little of his real parents. That might have happened in the case of Robert Willis. Certainly the fact that Robert Willis named a daughter "Matilda" does not support my supposition that Robert might have been the son of Robert Carter Willis, but does suggest a tie-up with Charles and Matilda Willis in Will 1715. Another thought is that Gen'l. Sherman's army burned 30 houses belonging to the Willis family around Williston. Family Bibles and portraits went up in flames. Afterward the men and women were too busily struggling for food and shelter to think about or talk about ancestry.

In the Virginia County Records, Vol. 1, Spotsylvania records, were found the following: a Richard Johnston was a witness in 1724. Richard Johnston died intestate in 1726 and Jael Johnston was administrator of his estate. (p85). Jael Johnston married widow Tutt, mother of Richard Tutt. Jael's will dated July 7, 1733; recorded Sept. 4, 1733, Executor Richard Tutt. It states in part to "my son Richard Tutt" to whom he bequeathed certain articles, among which was a "chest called Elizabeth Tutt's;" to my son James Williams...Richard Johnston bought land





in Spots. Co. in 1731 (p 119). Oct. 2, 1744, Robert Williamson of Caroline Co. to John Haley of Hanover Co., 400 acres in Spots. Co., land patented Jan. 10, 1735. Elizabeth, wife of Robert Williamson, acknowledges her dower. (p 166). Could Richard Johnson have married a daughter of this John Haley?

Which Richard Johnson went to South Carolina is a guess!

According to Chapman's History of South Carolina, large caravans of wagons in 1760-1762 brought men, many with families, from Virginia and North Carolina into South Carolina, some to speculate in land, others to stay. Among them were Richard Tutt, Richard Johnston (Johnson) and William Willis, each of whom received a grant of land. In 1762, Richard Johnson was granted 100 acres on Stephens Creek, which he sold to LeRoy Hammond in 1763 (Edgefield Co. Records and Index to Grants L-Z, 1695-1776). William Willis received a grant of 200 acres on northeast side of Wateree river 16 Jan. 1761, which he sold to John Simmons Feb. 3, 1761, recorded in Bk. 7, folio 188. Price Willis received a grant of 150 acres in Granville on Jan. 10, 1771.

The next record found in South Carolina for Richard Johnson is that on Apr. 24, 1790, Richard Johnson, Jr. deeded to



Richard Johnson, Sr. 200 acres "whereon Moses Kirkland formerly lived and Richard Johnson, Sr. now lives", head of Turkey Creek. Wits.: Joel Chandler, Robert Willis and Moor Johnson (Bk. 7, p 91). Richard Johnson was witness of a deed in Culpeper Co., Va. in 1769. No further record of William Willis has been found in South Carolina. Records show that Price Willis was a blacksmith in Shelby Co., Kentucky ca:1800. A Price Willis married Hester Middleton in Shelby Co. Nov. 24, 1817. Thus indications are that Richard Johnson returned to Virginia between 1763 and 1785-89, before finally settling in South Carolina. He could have married a Widow Willis in Culpeper Co., which was originally a part of Spotsylvania Co. while back in Virginia. The widow might have been the wife of a grandson of Charles and Matilda Willis. Possibly the widow of a son of Francis Willis, died in Culpeper Co. 1789 or earlier (inventory in 1789). John Willis, son of Charles and Matilda Willis was born ca. 1700-1714, named in his grandfather's will in 1715. Francis was born ca 1730-35, and his son born ca 1752 could have had a son Robert Willis in the spring of 1773. Or, Richard Johnson could have married the widow of Francis Willis himself in 1789 and returned immediately to South Carolina, which would make Robert Willis and Moore Johnson step-





brothers instead of half-brothers. These are possibilities for which to search.

In old Lunenburg Co., Va., records are found of a Robert Willis in 1749; Thomas Willis in 1750; Robert and Steven Willis in 1750; Edward Willis in 1752; William Willis in 1764, in St. James Parish; Robert Willis in 1769 in Cumberland Parish; Robert Willis in 1772; Mashack (sic) Willis in 1773 in Cumberland Parish (Mesheck Willis (of Tennessee" deeded land on Stephens Creek in Edgefield Co., S. C. in 1808); Shadrack Willis witnessed the will of Joshua Willis in N. C. in 1806; Robert Willis Sr. & Jr. in the same locality in Lunenburg Co. 1773-1783. The Stephen Willis family moved down to Georgia in the 1780's. A Robert Willis was on the 1790 census in Edgefield Co., S. C., with small children under 16 years of age.

In Wilkes Co., Ga., where several descendants of John Willis, will Orange Co., Va., 1762, settled, is found in Deed Bk. EE, p 95: Robert Willis named as testator in deed between Robert McGary (sic) and Blake & Pope, 12 Oct. 1787. A Robert McCreary was in Barnwell Co., S. C. later and Robert Moore Willis, son of Robert and Keziah Willis, married his daughter



Susan McCreary, ca 1830.

Following is the full text of the will of Robert Willis copied by Elizabeth DeHuff in Columbia, S. C. in Dept. of Archives: "Though laboring at this time under affliction I am never the less of Sound Mind & Memory. & knowing that it is appointed unto all men once to Die, I Robert Willis of the State & District aforesaid Doo make this my Last will & testament in manner & form following & first I would commit my Soul to God who gave it & I here with observe that where as all my children except my two youngist Dauters have had a part of my estate some more and some less as I shall hereafter Discribe to the best of my recollection having not kept an accurit account, & it is my will that the amount that each of my heirs has recd shall go for so much of their part of my estate when there is a Jeneral Devition made of my property which will not be until after the death of myself & wife & I will here observe that it is my will, that all my property real & personal should remain in the hands of my belov,d wife provided she is the longist liver for her own use & benefit with full power to carry on business the same as when I was alive excipt what property I herein will to my two youngist Daughters, of which I will now Discribe that is to say to my





Daughter Antonet I give the following negroes a young woman cald Cate & girle named tuner & one boy named Wade all to be for hir with their increase & to be heird by the heirs of hir Body for ever i allso will that should my Daughter Antonet marry in my beloved wifes lifetime that she should have five cows & calves or yearling & a fifty Dollar horse & one bed & bedstead, & to my Daughter Ellen I give one negro woman & child named Harriott & mug allso one negro girl named hester & one boy named Charles & the same amount of other property as is named above to hir Sister Antonet, & on the condition that they shall by hirs & hir heirs after hir & my will further is that if either of my Single Daughters Does marry & Die with out isue that their property shall be returnd back to my estate, & I give to my Daughter Matilda Reed one negro Boy exclusive of what she formerly had namd Sam, & which is to hir & hir heirs for ever-- & I here want it understood that if my beloved wife Keziah Willis shall think proper she has power to let any of my heirs have any property left in her hand During her life She will have power to let them take it at a fair valuation as so much paid towards their respective parts. I now proceed to name the different amounts that has been paid to my older children to



wit.,

Jas G. Willis	one thousand Dollars	\$1000
(should be Jno. T. Willis. There was no James G. known by anyone. The adm. papers show that \$1000 was advanced to John T. Willis. E. DeH.)		
Elijah Willis	six hundred Dollars	600
Robt. M. Willis	six hundred Dollars	600
Williamson W. Willis	five hundred Dollars	500
Winney Lott	six hundred Dollars	600
Martha Matthews	five hundred Dollars	500
Sarah Boytston	five hundred Dollars	500
Matilda Reed	seven hundred Dollars	700
Patrick V. Willis	nine hundred Dollars	900
Michael Willis	one thousand \$32	1032

each of my heirs with the amounts here charged shall be entitled to equal share and share alike in my estate after the Death of my beloved wife both of the real and personal, my beloved wife is hereby authorised to collect all out stand monies that may be Due me or to come Due for the support of hir self & family it must be recollected that the above property which is givin to my two youngest Daughters I consider to be worth each one thousand Dollars which is the amount as so much of their Respective shares at the final Settlement of my estate, my gold watch I leave to my Beloved son Robt. M. Willis, & should either of my two youngist Daughters marry after my Death & have a Disire to Settle on any part of my lands, my belovd wife shall have power to have five hundred acres Laid out to them for a settlement at





a fair Valuation by some Disintrusted persons of the Neighbourhood say two or three & I appoint my beloved Sons Elijah Willis & Robt. M. Willis executors to this my Last will to settle of the affairs of my estate after the Death of my belovd wife & to assist hir while she may live given under my hand this 23 of December & in the Sixty-eighth year of the independence of the United States of America.

Robt. Willis

(Will Bk. D, p 54, Barnwell Co., S. C.)

Our strongest threads of research still remain the tradition that "Robert Willis came from Virginia with a half-brother Moore Johnson," that "Our Willises came from Culpeper Co., Va.," according to John Turner Willis, my father, and how was Robert Willis enabled to buy so much land in Barnwell Co. in 1817/18?

#### Miscellaneous Notes

Gen'l. John Willis (monument in Natchez, Miss.), born 1759 in Robeson Co., N. C., was the son of Daniel and Elizabeth Moore Willis. The children of Daniel and Elizabeth (Moore) Willis were: Sarah, Elizabeth, Mildred, Nancy, Asinath, Mary, Daniel, John, Joab, Ahab, ROBERT, Josiah, Elias and Joseph.

If Richard Johnson married this widow Elizabeth (Moore)



Willis, it would fit in with Moore Johnson, who named his second daughter Elizabeth Johnson; but what of all these other 13 children besides Robert? Elizabeth Moore might not have been a first wife and in that case only Robert and one or two more children were hers.

If it is proved that Robert Willis was the son of Francis Willis, or some other son of John, son of Charles and Matilda Willis, then certainly we must be descended from Taliaferros and Thorntons. It was a wide-spread custom in early days to employ grandsons or nephews to be an "agent" on a large plantation to run the affairs of the estate. Robert Carter II, so employed his nephew, young Henry Willis, son of Francis and Elizabeth Carter Willis: "3 March 1776, Robert Carter to Capt. Richard Barnett. Henry Willis, my nephew, informed me he enlisted into the regular service yesterday at your particular request. Henry Willis is not 16 years old, has a father living in Frederick County, and he is my servant by indenture, duly executed and delivered to me by his Father when I took him. I demand his release." (Letter Book of Robert Carter of Nomini, Manuscript Div., Duke U. Library, Durham, N. C.) My "Uncle Kit" Willis worked for his grandfather Charles Ashley as a teenager, etc.





It is highly probable that Francis Willis, d 1789, was so employed by his grandfather, William Thornton. The will of Francis Thornton, June 6, 1766, July 2, 1767, states, "I give to my son William Thornton part of my land lying below Crow Swamp beginning on the sd Swamp joyning to Joseph Murdock being part of the land I bought from John McCormack lying on the lowest side Crow Swamp so up the sd Swamp to a White Oak... to a White Oak back of my log house where Francis Willis now lives so along the cornfield fence William Thornton now tend being the land I gave him when he married Elizabeth Fitzhugh..." He names no daughters, nor does he give the name of his wife; but he devises land in both King George County and Fauquier Co. to his son, Francis Thornton and names the Hon. Coll. Presley Thornton and son, Francis as exrs. (King Geo. Co., Will Bk. k, p 262-265).

In Va. Hist. Mag. Vol. 13, p 101 is "William Brooke married Sarah Taliaferro and John Brooke married Lucy, daughter of Francis Thornton, of King George Co. and his wife Sarah Fitzhugh." Since no date is given, it is not known which of the above Francis Thorntons is meant, Sr. or Jr.

Charles Willis's son, John (see above deed) had land also



adjoining Murdock's, hence John Willis and William Thornton were close neighbors. A daughter of John Willis married William Johnson and her name was probably "Lucy" (See above deed). Hence Elizabeth Willis whose will 1767 was witnessed by William Chapman and William Thornton was perhaps the daughter of Francis Thornton and named her son Francis Willis.

A William Thornton, on May 18, 1588, subscribed 50 lbs. toward the defense of England against the Spanish Armada. Miss Frances M. Hailes of the Alabama State Archives in 1931 stated that the Thornton line came through William the Conqueror. Peyton Neale Clark in "Old King William Homes and Families", pages 105-106, says that William Thornton, the first of whom there is a record in Va. came from Yorkshire, England to York Co., Va. before 1646. A portion of York Co. became Gloucester Co. in 1651. William Thornton moved into the new county and established his home "The Hills," named for his home in Yorkshire, England. W. G. Stannard in W&M (1) 89-93 & 157-158 stated that William Thornton obligated himself, by a paper recorded in York Co., to care for the cattle of John Liptrap until the latter became of age.

William Thornton had a grant of 164 acres in Petsworth Parish, Gloucester Co., adjoining the land of Mr. Rich. Bernard.





There are three records in Essex Co., relating to William Thornton, the first, a deed, dated July 6, 1675, from William Thornton, Gent., of Gloucester Co. to Francis and Roland, two of his sons, conveying 2000 acres on the Rappahannock; the 2nd, a Power of Attorney, dated Sept. 1693, from William Thornton of Gloucester Co. to James Kay of Rappahannock, concerning 2000 acres in the freshies of the Rappahannock, land bought from Mr. Mott; the 3rd, the record of a Power of Attorney dated 1708, from William Thornton formerly of Gloucester Co., but now of Stafford Co. William died in Stafford Co.

Octavia Tollicoffer Bond in "The Family Chronicle and Kinship Bk." states that William Thornton, the immigrant, married the daughter of the Colonial Governor, Col. Peter Presly, whose wife appears to have been a Newman. (Va. M. Hist. 26 pp 87/8 & 34V93.) In addition to sons Francis (1651) and Roland mentioned in the deed, there was William (1649-1727) and Pressley. (Will of Francis Thornton, King Geo. Co., 1766).

One Francis Thornton, born March 14, 1651, was a Burgess from Spotsylvania Co. in 1723 and 1726. One Francis Thornton Jr. married Mary Taliaferro, daughter of John Taliaferro, "The



Ranger," and Sarah Smith Taliaferro. This Sarah Smith was the daughter of Lawrence Smith and wife Mary \_\_\_\_\_. Lawrence Smith and brother John Smith were sons of Thomas Smith and grandsons of Arthur Smith (?). Arthur Smith is listed as a nephew of Sir Thomas Smythe, President and Treasurer of the Va. Company and of the Brittish East Indian Co. He was son of Sir Thomas Smythe of Estenhanger Castle, Kent Co., England, who married in 1552 Alice, daughter of Sir Andrea Judd, Lord Mayer of London. (Mr. Moreland's notes.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Fitzhugh of "Eagles' Nest" married Sarah Carter, daughter of Robert Carter and Elizabeth Landon (Willis) Carter, ca 1718. Their daughter Sarah, perhaps, was the Sarah who married Francis Thornton.

#### ASHLEY FAMILY

Now that I have more perspective on the Ashley family of Grandma Willis, I can see certain glaring errors; on p 137 of the Ashley family, I suggest that the orphan Nathaniel Ashley who was put under the tuition of William Fleetwood was a Nathaniel who later lived in Laurens Co., S. C. It was, however, definitely the Nathaniel Ashley who moved to Barnwell Co., S. C. and married Elizabeth Wilson in 1790.





The William Ashley who was the Administrator of the estate of John Ashley who died intestate in Bertie Co. 1768 was our own ancestor William, a brother of John Ashley dec'd. A letter years ago from Mrs. Walker, great-granddaughter of Nathaniel Ashley stated that "the father of William Ashley (her grandfather and son of Nat.) was John Ashley who was killed by a falling tree no doubt while clearing land and left a house full of little boys." Because she had skipped a generation and left out Nathaniel Ashley, I have no credence to her letter. Now, I realize that, as often happens, she simply left out one generation. Nathaniel Ashley's father was John Ashley who died in 1768. After his tutorlage with Fleetwood, Nathaniel came to S. C. with his uncle William Ashley and probably lived with him until marriage, although his mother Mary Ashley married a Collins and also moved to Barnwell Co., S. C. Charles Ashley's children always called Nathaniel their "uncle," and vice versa.

John and William Ashley were sons or brothers of Charles Ashley who was a Lieutenant in the Regulars and was in Orange Co., N. C. in 1779/1780 (Tax List) with William there also.

I had thought that an Ashley married a Norfleet; but it



was probably a Weathersbee. Marmaduke, James and Elisha Norfleet were in Nansemond Co., Va., in 1695. Elisha's daughter, Eliza, married Richard Wyatt. James Norfleet moved to Edgecombe Co., N. C. and left sons Thomas and Marmaduke and daughter, "Philli-shia". (Ashe's Biog. Hist. of N. C., Vol. 2, p 313). Marmaduke had a dau. named "Louisa." Thomas Weathersbee, will 1772, named his first son Wyatt Weathersbee. He possibly married Joyce Wyatt, the daughter of Richard Wyatt and Eliza Norfleet.

A deed in Halifax Co., N. C., Dec. 10, 1760 names Jacob, James and Elijah Wyatt.

Edward Collins (no dates given) of Bertie Co., N. C. had daughters Sarah and Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Michael Hill, son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Hardy) Hill. Isaac Hill's will names sons Michael, Nathaniel, etc. (Ashe's Biog. Hist. of N. C., Vol. 2, p 637). Isaac Hill married Margaret Jennings on 28th July 1708. (Reg. Christ Church, p 81).

Patent Bk. 3 (State Library, Richmond, Va.), p 258, John Ashley and John Hamper given patent of 1000 acres for transporting 6 persons, March 10, 1653; p 422, John Ashley given 240 acres; p 280, John Ashley given 137 acres.

John Ashley patent for 137 acres adjacent Robert Briggs and





Abya Bonnison & the Glebe lands, 20 Dec. 1669. John Ashley assigns to Robert Briggs, 17 June 1671. Wits.: Richd Barber & hen hastewood (sic). "Recog. 11" (?) July 1671. Jane Ashley gave Power of Attorney to Hugh Brant to acknowledge sale to Briggs July 1671. (Fleet's Lancaster Co. Deeds, p 53).

The miniature of "Lady Jane Cooper Ashley" was handed down in the family of the Nathaniel Ashley who moved to Coffee Co., Ga. It was burned in the home of Mrs. Dickey, Fairfield, Ga.

= Nathaniel Duckenfield ordered to keep a "Public Ferry" from the Plantation whereon Ormes (?) now lives over Chowan river to Edenton, 1747. (Ashe's Biog. Hist. of N. C., Vol. 2, p 629). This Nathaniel died in England without issue before 1756. (Olds Abst. of N. C. Wills, p 21). In records of 1772 is stated, however, "Sir Nathaniel Duckenfield is a young gentleman of great worth." (N.C. Col. Recs., Vol. 1). He must have been the son of John Duckenfield.

#### THE TALIAFERRO FAMILY

Arms: Hand and arm holding dagger cutting bar.

Motto: Fortis et firmis



Tradition: Julius Ceasar while inspecting camp at twilight was surrounded by Gallic warriors who were bent upon taking his life. Ceasar so bravely comported himself that he won the admiration of the leader of the band who refused to allow him to be slain. Ceasar captured the band and, recognizing the man, made him one of his personal attendants and let him bear arms--a privilege for Roman soldiers only--and then the name Taliaferro originated from the Latin "telum", a dart and "ferro" to bear.

A branch went to Normandy thence to England under William the Conqueror and became known as "The Hero of Hastings". William afterwards made him Baron Taliaferro in County Kent, known as "Earls of Pinnington". After the Edict of Nantes, two brothers James and John came to America and purchased estates on the James.

John afterwards settled at Williamsburg at "Powhatan" and was progenator of the family in Carolina and in Virginia.

There are a number of legends and traditions concerning the origin of the Taliaferro family and the derivation of the name "Taliaferro." One legend dates back to Julius Ceasar and his campaign in Gaul in the year 58 B. C. A second is given in Hume's "History of England" where Tallifer was created Duke of





Angouleme in 804 A. D. by Charles, the Bold, of France. His dau. Isabel Tallifer married King John of England, who was forced to sign the Magna Charta--(one of their daus. m. a Willis who was Chancellor of the Exchequer)--The third legend is in "William the Conqueror", by Phillips Russel. On p 153 the account of the troubadour Taillefer, personal friend of William "the Conqueror" is given: Tallifer challenged the Brittish at Hastings by riding out between the lines of the opposing forces, tossing his sword into the air and catching it, and singing a song of Charlemagne, of Roland and of Oliver and his vassels, who died at Roncesvales.

A similar account is given by Hume in his "Hist. of Eng." This Taillefer was killed at Hastings. It is not known if he left descendants.

In a criticism of the "Of Sceptred Race" by Annah Robinson Watson, by the Editor of the Va. Mag. of Hist. and Biog., Vol. 18, p 350, it is stated that surnames were not in use in England until about 1250. Mr. W. B. McGroarty in W& M (2) 4, 191-3 gives some correspondence between Chancellor Wythe and Thomas Jefferson, while the latter was representing the colonies in Italy. Chancellor Wythe had m. 2nd Elizabeth,



dau. of Richard and Elizabeth (Eggleston) Taliaferro of "Powhatan," Jas. City Co., Va., Richard's will of 1775 mentions his son-in-law, George Wythe and wife, my dau. Elizabeth. Chancellor Wythe had heard that his wife's family may have come originally from Italy, so he asked Mr. Jefferson to investigate. The results do not appear to have been conclusive, though it is said he secured their coat-of-Arms.

Information from Mr. Jefferson from the ancient books of the crown (Caronni) in Milan for Mr. Wythe, acc. to McGroarty on pp 196-8, of above Bartolomeo Taliaferro of Venice went to London during the reign of Elizabeth (I.) and resided in the parish of St. Olaves. He died in 1602. His will is on file in Prerogative Court, Canterbury (s 29 Montague).

2. Francois m. 1586, Elizabeth (d. 1610) at Bishop's Gate (Brittish Record 2, Vol. 25, p 407.

3. A son Francis, born in 1585 (?), whose son

4. Robert Taliaferro, born 1635 came to Virginia 1655, settling in Gloucester Co., where he married the dau. of Rev. Charles Grymes.

Wythe, a Signer of the Decl. of Indep., spoke in his letters to Mr. Jefferson of a Laurence Taliaferro who went to Scotland in





1500. On page 259 of a translation of Reum Scoticarum, by James Aikman, Esq. of Glasgow, it is stated that there was a Lawrence Taliaferro in Scotland in 1513.

Mr. McGroarty leaned toward the Norman Conquest version, believing that the family adopted the motto, "Talia ferro" bestowed on the troubadour by William the Conqueror, and that it was later adopted as their name. Previous to 1066, the name had been Taillefer.

Robert Taliaferro, the emigrant, and founder of the family in Va. was of English parentage, acc. to Hugh M. McIlhany in "Some Va. Families" and is considered the first in America. He came to Virginia from England in 1645/6, and is recorded as witnessing a will in York Co. in 1647. He patented land in Gloucester Co. in 1655, and 900 acres on Peropotank Creek in 1662, which became known as "Attopotomy." He and Col. Lawrence Smith patented 6300 acres, jointly, on the Rappahannock. The statement is made that he had a brother John who came to Va. also.

Robert married about 1653 Sarah or Mary, dau. of Rev. Charles Grymes of "Grymesby" on the Planketank and of "Brandon in Middlesex Co. (Early Settlers of Alabama, by Saunders).



Robert Taliaferro's birth is given by some as 1626, and as 1635 by others. If he was the first in Va. and came in 1645/6, the earlier date would appear more nearly correct. Sarah and Mary Grymes are given as the wife of Robert Taliaferro, Sr. Stannard says only that she was a dau. of Rev. Charles Grymes. Mr. McGroarty gives his wife as Catherine Grymes, and that she was twice married; 1st to Robert Taliaferro and after his death to Mr. Dedman, and that Robert Taliaferro, Jr. knew her as "Grandmother Dedman." In 16T164, Mr. McGroarty gives from page 208, Essex Co. records of date Aug. 1718 the following: "release of 600 acres formerly granted Mr. Chas. Grymes Sept. 4, 1654, which was by the sd Charles Grymes willed to Catherine Dedman, grandmother of the sd Robert Taliaferro." The "sd Robert Taliaferro refers to Robt. Taliaferro, Jr., son of Robert, Sr., as given on p 206 of same record. "Land Grants 1669-79", p 445, Richmond Land Office shows a grant of land from Sir William Berkeley to Robert Taliaferro, son of Robert Taliaferro, Sr. of 739 acres in freshes of Rappahannock, south side, adjoining Henry Corbin and Mr. Grymes, 17 March 1672/3, 100 acres being his due as grandchilde of ye said Grymes. A deed shows this to be Charles Grymes. 18T163 and 27V184/5.

From the above records it would appear that the date of the





birth of Charles Grymes' daughter who married Robert Taliaferro must have been earlier than 1660, the date given for the birth of Sarah Grymes, if her grandchild, Robert Taliaferro, Jr., was born either in 1664, as given by McGroarty, or 1667, as given elsewhere, was named as the recipient of the 100 acres of land in 1672/3. Mr. McG thought that Rev. Charles grymes died in 1660 or 1661 and that his dau. was at that time the wife of Robert Taliaferro.

Mr. W. B. McGroarty--in 18T164--also said that Robert Taliaferro and his Grymes wife had 7 children: the oldest--

1. Francis (1654-1710, living in Gloucester Co. 1682, justice of Essex Co. in 1695, m. Elizabeth, dau. of Col. John Catlett of Essex Co., Va.

2. John (1656-1720), "The Ranger", Justice of Essex Co., married Sarah, dau. of Maj. Lawrence Smith of Gloucester Co.

3. Charles (1663) Essex Co.

4. Richard (1665-1712) living in Richmond Co., 1710.

5. Mary (1658?)

6. Catherine, m. John Battaile. (Catherine b. 1660?)

7. Robert (1667-1726) m Sarah, dau. of Col. John Catlett.



## GRYMES FAMILY

A tradition in the family of a Buckner Grimes, Staunton, Va., was that the first known Grimes was a cook on the ship of Sir Francis Drake in the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth.

Rev. Charles Grymes appears to have been the first Grymes in Virginia. There were other families by that name in Va., but not known to be of the same line. A William Grymes, son of Sir Thomas Grymes of Peckham, England, was in Va. in 1694.

One of the first records, if not the first, of Charles Grymes gives his birth as the year 1612. This is in "Alumni Cantabrigienses," a biographical list of all students of the University of Cambridge from earliest time to 1890, and reads, "Charles Grymes (Pembroke, aged 19, 1631), son of John Grymes, Rector of Ightham, Kent, was very probably the man of that name who was minister in York and Gloucester Cos., Virginia, 1644-46. There was a large migration from Kent to Virginia at that time 33V219. The year 1612 as the birth year of Rev. Charles Grymes would give weight to the belief that his dau. who m. Robt. Tailiaferro was born earlier than the year 1660.

Charles Grymes was known as the Rev. Charles Grymes of "Brandon" and was officiating in York Co, as early as 1642. He





was granted 2200 acres for transporting 44 persons to the Colony of Va. during 1652-54. He was the recipient of a Judgment in York Co., Va., in 1651 and was clerk of Gloucester Co. (W. G. Stannard in 27V184-5.) He moved to Gloucester Co. late in life and died there in 1660 or 61. He had two children: John of "Brandon" and a dau. who m. Robert Taliaferro. Mr. McGroarty believed this dau. to have been Catherine and that he had another dau. named Mary. The son John is thought to have been born in 1640 and died 1709, aged 69 according to the Christ Church Register.

John Grymes (d. 1709) of Brandon, married Alice, dau. of Lawrence and Sarah (Warner) Townley. Alice was the granddau. of Augustine and Mildred (Reade) Warner. Their son John Grymes (1691) m. Lucy (1698), dau. of Philip Ludwell, son of Philip Ludwell & Lucy Higginson, widow of Lewis Burwell and William Bernard.



## MORE WILLIS FAMILY

MAY 1961. Recent research in the Virginia State Library and in Charleston, S. C. has unearthed the following information:

CONCERNING THE DESCENDANTS OF JOHN WILLIS, died in Richmond Co., Va., 1715.

In the Index to Court Order Books of King George County, Va., in Bk. 4, p 460, is given a reference to the marriage of Mary Willis, widow of John Willis (son of above), died 1728 to John Jennings, under date of March 5, 1761. Ref. Records K. G. on May 3, 1728. As given before, John, nephew of this John Willis had litigation with John and Mary Jennings.

William Willis, son of the above John Willis (1715) left two sons: John (will in Orange Co., 1762), of whom we have an almost complete record, and William Willis. This William Willis has not been found of record in King George, Orange or Culpeper Cos., since he was named in the will of his mother Sarah Turberville, 1761.

A William Willis received a grant of 200 acres of land on the Wateree river, South Carolina, 16 June 1760





(Vol. 7, p 181) which he sold soon thereafter. Then we find a William Willis's will recorded in Rutherford Co., North Carolina (Bk. A, p 1) dated April 14, 1782, in which he names sons William and Jacob dec'd, and dau. Elizabeth Buckhana (sic); grandsons Arthur Buckhanan, William, son of Jacob dec'd and this William's mother, Elizabeth Willis, and Henry, son of son, William. On Oct. 15, 1762, King George Co., Va., (Bk. 4, p 501) a James Buckhannon witnessed a deed with Arther (sic) Morson. There were no further records (after 1761) found in South Carolina of the William of this grant on the Wateree. He probably moved on northwesterly and was the same who died in Rutherford Co., N. C. and was also the son of William Willis and his wife Sarah who died as Sarah Turberville.

The third son of John Willis, will 1715, was Charles Willis, whose will or administration was probably recorded in the first will book of King George Co., which has been lost, for neither will nor administration was found recorded for him. This John Willis named a son of Charles named John in his will.



This grandson, John Willis remained in King Geo. Co., as the following deeds will show: King Geo. Co. Deed Bk. 2, p 142, March 2, 1736, John Willis, planter, of Hanover Parish deeded to Isaac Pitman 60 acres along the lines of Archibald Combs dec'd and Maj. Jeremiah Murdock...to Bristol Iron Works...to Branch..to land of Isaac Pitman and land of Ralph Wormley dec'd. land formerly belonging to Thomas James, to small branch which heads in the cornfield of the 'sd John Willis. In the will of John Willis 1715, he bequeathed to son Charles-- entailed to his son John--"to the 'sd Charles excepting that part which I have hearby given unto Thomas James; and to Thomas James, he bequeathed "land joyne upon the land of Mr..John Wormley..." Witnesses to this deed were Thos. Dickeson (Dixon?) and Richard Hornbuckle; price 50 £.

King Geo. Co. Deed Bk. 3, p 499, John Willis, of Hanover Parish, mortgaged 170 acres and three negroes to the Exrs. of the estate of Harry Turner dec'd on July 3, 1752; the debt to be paid by "Jan. 1st next." Wits.: William Jett, Frances.Jett, Chas. Deane and





William Jett, Jr. Orders, Judgments, etc. 1751-1765, p 115, a deed of mortgage from John Willis to Thomas Turner, Edward Dixon, John Tayloe and Thomas Jett, Gent., Exrs. of the will of Harry Turner dec'd was proved by the oaths of Wm. Jett, Francis & Chas. Deane, which is ordered to be recorded. ....

In the same Court Order Bk., p 148, Feb. 5, 1753, an order qualifies Edward Dixon, Brother-in-law of Harry Turner dec'd (and son-in-law of Thomas Turner) to whose estate John Willis died as debter, this Edward Dixon as Administrator of the estate of John Willis dec'd. Thus John Willis died before he paid off the mortgage on his property.

In the same Order Bk., however, p 877, on Nov. 1, 1759, Elizabeth, widow of John Willis dec'd was allotted her dower. This property, Elizabeth Willis in her will 1767 bequeathed to her son Francis Willis. It seems probable that wife Elizabeth was Elizabeth Jett, dau. of Francis Jett.

Francis Willis, only known son of John and Elizabeth Willis of King Geo. Co., Va., died intestate in Culpeper Co. in 1789.



This Francis Willis married a daughter of Ann Marders (a Wm. Marders wit. a deed between Joseph Smith and Wm. Rowley, Sr. in King Geo. Co. Oct. 1, 1745, Bk. 3, p 78) and had children: John, Charles, Francis and Jane, as shown by the following deed:

Deed Bk. S, p 514, Culpeper Co., Va., Apr. 18, 1796, At a Court held in Culpeper Co., Ann Marders "for the love " for her dau. Jane and grandchildren Ann Ward, Sarah Monroe, John Willis, Charles Willis, Francis Willis and Jane Willis deeds to them a slave, which she states must not fall into the hands of William Poulter, husband of her dau. Jane. The deed was dated Nov. 14, 1795.

Concerning these: In Culpeper Co., Va., Marriages:  
 Jane Willis with William Poulter, Dec. 16, 1788  
 Jane Willis with William Hisle in 1796 (the daughter of Francis and Jane)  
 John Willis with Edna Bragg, Dec. 22, 1802  
 Charles Willis with Lucy Shelton, Jan. 16, 1794  
 Francis Willis died without issue, will recorded in Chatham Co., N. C.

Charles Willis, son of John, will 1715, had a grandson named William Willis. Deed Bk. 7, p 36, King Geo. Co., Va., Dec. 4, 1784, "William Willis of the





County of Fauquier and Hester his Johnson" (the Clerk evidently started to write a relationship of these two and then did not do so) deed to George Marshall of King Geo. Co. 178 acres in Hanover Parish "between lands of Elizabeth Thornton, Murdock's estate and George Marshalls," "as heir at law to his father Charles Willis dec'd & his grandfather." signed by both William Willis and Hester (X) Johnson. (Witnesses to this deed were William Marshall, John Monroe (note: grda. of Ann Marders), Geo. Marshall Jr. and Jas. Marshall.) In King George Co., Va., Hester Willis asked to be appointed administratrix of the estate of Charles Willis. (Information from Mr. King.) This seems to indicate that the first Charles Willis had a son Charles, who married Hester \_\_\_\_\_ and had the above son William Willis, of Fauquier Co., Va. Then Hester married 2nd a Johnson.

In Edgefield Co., S. C., in Equity file # 314 in a suit over the estate of Molly Rogers is the following information: Molly Rogers was a sister of Sarah, Hester and Anna Hazel (Johnson) and of Joshua Johnson. Molly died in 1820/21. Molly's sister Sarah lived with her. "Hester Johnson moved there in the



Spring of 1826....Sister Anna Hazel lived there for several years before Hester's son, a grown man, lived with his mother (son not named)."

Whether or not these were children of Hester Johnson, mother of William Willis and formerly widow of Charles Willis 2nd or Hester herself is not known. However, it is a possibility, since no further records of Hester Johnson have been found in Fauquier Co., Va.

This William Willis might also have been the father of the James Willis, who married Elizabeth Wilson in Caroline Co., Va. and left his will recorded in Chatham Co., N. C. in 1795, naming wife Elizabeth and sons Wilson, Larkin, Elijah and Elisha. He also must have had a son, perhaps named William, whose sons married in Albemarle Co., Va.: William Willis to Polly Ballard, May 22, 1787 and John Willis to Mary Binge, May 19, 1794.





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